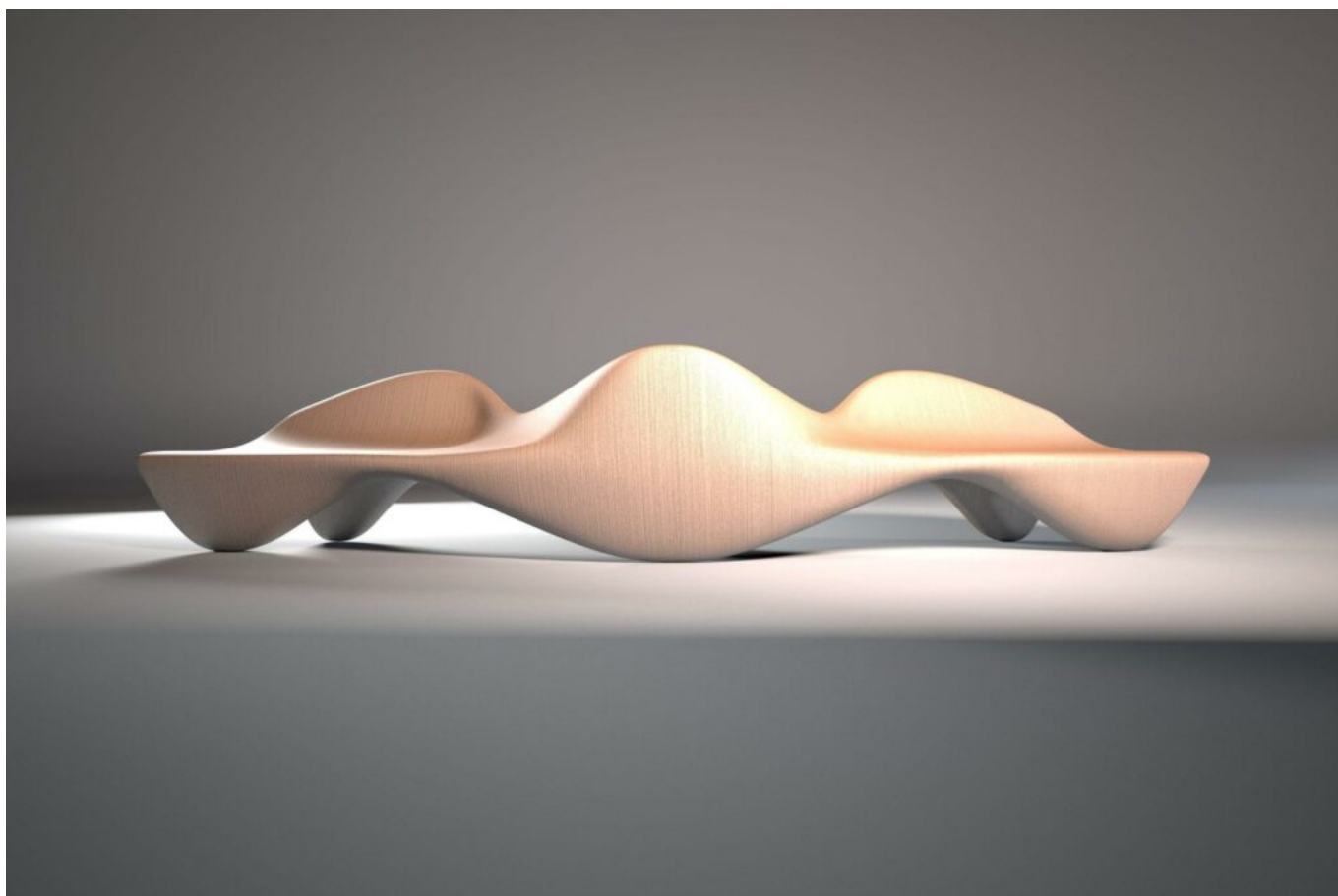


London Festival of Architecture and Network Rail reveal 'Sitting Pretty' designs

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The London Festival of Architecture (LFA) and Network Rail have revealed the winning teams and designs for new seating to be installed in some of London's largest rail stations.

Architecture and design students, recent graduates and emerging practitioners were invited to consider engaging and imaginative seating solutions that can add value to and maximise the possibilities of the under-used public space within stations.

The competition was conceived by the London Festival of Architecture to consider how better station seating might look, with the potential for winning ideas to be replicated across stations by NetworkRail in the future.

The 'Sitting Pretty' competition was judged by an expert panel comprising:

- Anthony Dewar (Professional Head Buildings and Architecture Safety, Technical and Engineering, Network Rail)
- Frank Anatole (Principal Architect, Network Rail)
- Paul Priestman (Director, PriestmanGoode)
- Tamsie Thomson (Director, London Festival of Architecture)
- Will Hurst (Managing editor, Architects' Journal)

The winning designers have been awarded £5,000 to each manufacture their seating proposals, which will be installed across 4 London stations—Waterloo, Victoria, Charing Cross and London Bridge— as soon as it is possible to do so.

Tamsie Thomson, director of the London Festival of Architecture, said: “The ‘Sitting Pretty’ competition is a fantastic opportunity to bring extraordinary design into an everyday London environment, and we’re delighted to see such a strong line-up of winning designs.

“I’m really looking forward to seeing the benches in position across London’s mainline stations, and to see the public response to these brilliant new installations. Thanks to Network Rail, we’ve been able to give a fine cohort of emerging architecture and design talent an exceptional platform—if you’ll pardon the pun.”

Frank Anatole, Principal Architect at Network Rail, said: “I’m really excited by the unique perspective on public seating design each of the winners have brought to this competition. This is about much more than simply designing a bench for sitting on.

“These designs challenge us, as public space managers, to think about the visual, social and environmental impact of the furniture we place in our public realm. They’re fun, imaginative and thought provoking. Most importantly they will give station users and members of the public a direct opportunity to experience and respond to some amazing emerging concepts.”

The five winning designers and teams overcame competition from 70 entrants. They are:

- Belugaby Hylemo & Ai Build: From catwalks to festivals, Hylemo specialises in the production of parametric pavilions delivered through digital fabrication. Now in collaboration with Ai build-developers of 3D printing technology driven by robotic arms—they wish to challenge the way furniture in the public domain is produced; reducing material waste to zero and engaging in the circular economy of materials. Through the boundless opportunity of forms offered by additive manufacturing, Hylemo & Ai Build have created a bench that turns seating into an experience of art.



- ConvoStation by The United Suburbs : ConvoStation is a brightly coloured communal rocking chair-intended to bring strangers together in today's ever-moving and ever-busy lifestyles. The design incites a conversation between strangers, generates awareness of people's surroundings through motion, and opens the opportunity for new friendships and chance encounters. ConvoStation is supported by Universal Spraying Ltd.



- Lacuna by Nick Tyrer with Victoria Philpott: Nick Tyrer and Victoria Philpott have brought together seating and striking planting through a design that offers a spatial experience while remaining functional and comfortable. Lacuna offers a sense of security and personal space on a large station concourse, while also creating a much larger visual impact upon the identity of the station. Lacuna is supported by James Lathams and Garnica, and fabricated by Raskl.



- Reclaim, Re-invent, Re-purpose by Atelier La Juntana: Looking to highlight the new role of railways and stations in urban regeneration-not just as transition points, but destinations-the proposal takes inspiration from the complex yet powerful spatial encounters between railway lines and the urban fabric of stations and the city. The design treats reclaimed timber track sleepers with steam bending and digital CNC forming techniques, creating geometries that re-interpret the network infrastructure, and raise awareness of the importance of re-purposing and re-inventing in railway stations of the future. The modular and adaptable design can be expanded to create multiple configurations inspired by different infrastructure settings. Reclaim, Re-invent, Re-purpose is supported by Shadbolt, University of East London and Kohn Pedersen Fox.



- Sitting on London's Clay by Local Collective Studio: Local Collective are creating seating using London's clay-a natural material found beneath Londoners' feet. The modular system offers different sizes and proportions tailored to different activities: from social interactions to more private working or relaxation. The bench's materiality offers an installation that is sustainable and breathable, and one that improves indoor air quality thanks to clay's ability to absorb indoor humidity and toxins.



Photo credits: London Festival of Architecture